

# NEWS

## Voting system deemed success

■ Several communities use new program.

By Linda May

Macomb Daily Special Writer

From the vantage point of the Macomb County building on election night, technology smiled on the Aug. 8 primary and the county's new Diebold Accuvote system.

Macomb County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh chose that system after Michigan was offered federal funds for electronic vote tabulators as part of the federal Help America Vote Act of 2004.

At 8:18 p.m. Tuesday, Macomb County was among the first to report partial election results. By 10:30 p.m. Macomb had reported more results than any county in the state.

Communities in the county that were on the Accuvote system reported results ahead of Clinton Township, St. Clair Shores, Harrison Township and Shelby Township, which opted to use the ES&S M-100 system.

The results could have come in even faster.

Warren, on the Accuvote system, also reported later, but Sabaugh said that was due to the city's size and to a phone line issue on Warren's part.

Some communities reported results to their own Web sites first, then sent results to the county, which delayed overall tallies.

However, the ES&S M-100 system performed satisfactorily. Results from that system had to be integrated into the county's system, and in the end, all went well.

Anyone with a computer and an Internet connection could get the same real-time results as the county and the media by logging onto [www.macomb-countymi.gov](http://www.macomb-countymi.gov) and clicking on the "2006 Vote Macomb County" link.

In the past, the county opened one of its offices to at least a half dozen members of the media, who sat at county computers and reported tallies by phone.

This week, only the Associated Press and The Macomb Daily had reporters in the lobby. They used cellular phones.

Standing in the lobby and pointing past the glass doors into the clerk's office, Sabaugh said, "In the old days, there would be candidates packed in there waiting for totals while we punched in the numbers."

Tuesday, Sabaugh was happy with how well the system worked and acted the consummate host for late-working employees and lobby visitors. She

stopped by and spoke with the Greg Murray family, who were using computers made available to the public for checking election results. They were particularly interested in the board of commissioners race in District 17 in Mount Clemens and Clinton Township. Murray, chairman of the Macomb County Democratic Black Caucus, brought his sons Greg, 12, Joshua, 10 and Jordan, 8.

"Carmella seems like a mom with a new baby," Murray said, "making sure it has all its fingers and toes."

"My boys are all computer-savvy, so they are taking to all this naturally. I'm here to teach my sons about this political process. I want to expose them to voting as an important civic duty. They are asking a lot of good questions," he said.

Murray said he was disappointed with the "dismal" voter turnout and said he makes efforts to impress upon voters the difference that just one vote, or one vote per precinct, can make.

"We've been using the same county Web site since 1997," chief elections clerk Roger Cardamone said. "We used to tabulate with a mainframe computing system. We had a crew of 15 to 20 people who actually had to keypunch totals from every precinct. Now we upload each city and township's results by modem directly to the county Web site."